

Application of the conflict theory of Collier and Hoeffler to the First Chechen War

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to find out if the chosen theory, *Greed and Grievance in Civil War* by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2000), is applicable to the conflict of First Chechen War and if it can explain this war. The theory chosen investigates the effect of the causes connected with the term greed and grievance and the way they influence the outbreak of civil wars. (Collier, Hoeffler 2000:1) Concerning the intrastate war chosen, it was defined by attempts of Russian government after the dissolution of the Soviet Union to suppress separatist movement in Chechnya in southern Russia and its strive for independence, while involving in armed conflict with the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic of Ichkeria from 1994 to 1996. (UCDP 2015)

2. Introducing the chosen theory: Collier and Hoeffler – greed and grievance as the combination of the economic and political perspective

Greed and Grievance in Civil War by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler is one of the most famous works dealing mostly with the african civil wars that was developed for the world bank. This theory attempts to answer the question asking under what circumstances rebellions or uprisings which later become civil wars break, and therefore when do the conflicts change from latent to open and violent. As the name of the theory implies, the study of these two authors examines the terms greed and grievance considered as the primary cause of civil wars and their real impact on their initiation. Under the term greed economic issues, particularly the financing of the war, is included by the authors of the theory, while the concept of grievance involves inequality, political oppression and persecution, ethnic and religious differences and hatred (Collier, Hoeffler 2000: 1). Thus the first model deals with the emergence of civil wars in terms of economic perspective and the second one from the point of view of political science.

As far as the *grievance* - outbreak of rebellion as a direct and open manifestation of conflict and possible civil war motivated by injustice - is concerned, there are three main reasons for it according to Collier and Hoeffler (2000: 11-14): **inter-group hatred** (mostly inter-ethnic or inter-religious hatreds), **political exclusion of** a certain group or groups **and vengeance**.

Inter-group hatred is related to states with heterogeneity of population, therefore the heterogeneity itself, ethnic is regarded as a factor increasing the risk of civil wars initiation. Political exclusion, marginalization, discrimination or exploitation of certain group of the society being a minority disadvantaged by the majority can also represent a risk factor, e.g. in case of ingoring the needs of the poorest groups of population. The feeling of injustice and desire for revenge increases the alienation of population groups from the same country as well as the potential risk of further conflict. In this case the time interval between the moment and previous conflict is crucial as it depends on the fact if the generation involved previously is still alive and remaining in leading positions of the particular group. While all factors mentioned above undoubtedly cause conflicts and increase their intensity, they may not necessarily lead to the manifestation of the conflicts by violent means.

The second model investigated by this theory – *greed*- is related to the funds needed for an organization of an uprising that can later become a civil war. To run a military organization that is active in an armed conflict more human and **financial resources** is needed than in case of „only“ organizing riots and causing tensions. The usual methods of gaining funds for these organizations include opportunities of **gaining control of primary commodity export** and finding potential sources of finance represented by **foreign governments and diasporas** sympathizing with the rebellion, since rebellions themselves may not be able to raise funding from conventional sources. (Collier, Hoeffler 2000: 4-11) Collier mentions quasi quasi-criminal activities as a possible means of funding as well, however the authors do not include them among the main sources of financing mentioned (Collier, 2000: 8). Nevertheless, it should be noted in this regard that the sole existence of these requirements does not automatically lead to transition of the conflict into the violent phase and thus it does not explain sufficiently the actual way how the open conflicts develops. (Collier, Hoeffler 2000: 4-11.)

There are also other factors included in the concept of greed that are not required for the transition of the conflict to the violent phase, however, their presence increases the possibility of its emergence. One of them is **geographical factor**, which includes characteristics of the territory – if the territory of a state is e.g. rugged, mountainous and covered with forests, it makes the rebel group gain the advantages and thus increases the possibility of civil war. Another important factor is the **population** while the rule is that countries with relatively high population density and urbanization are less prone to cause civil wars. **Cohesion**, as another factor related to greed, is characteristics favouring to the side where the army of the

government is, especially because it usually has a long history of operating and reinforcing its unity, while the rebels must achieve these qualities within much shorter period of time. The government may also often rely on the support of the public as a consequence of the sense of patriotism among the residents of the country, while the rebel group might have to look for another alternative to achieve this identity. In addition to cohesion, an army needs motivation: rebel forces must be persuaded to want to destroy the enemy. **Military motivation** thus also plays a role. (Collier, Hoeffler 2000: 8-9)

The conclusion of the authors of this study is that the concept of *grievance* does not explain emergence of civil wars sufficiently. There was no relation found between the onset of war and the inequality and political oppression. As for the ethnic and religious divisions, the authors admit that if there is an ethnic group in a state including more than 45 but less than 90% of population, the chances for the outbreak of the civil war are much higher. Concept of *greed* nevertheless offers much better explanation and clarification of the reasons of civil war emergence, as it considers financial motivations a main cause. Financial motivations and opportunities to bankroll conflict that can later become a civil war are different but mostly they include funding from the profits of selling raw materials that can be found within the territory where the conflict takes place and the funds stemming from diasporas. (Collier, Hoeffler 2000)

Authors also concluded that a higher rate of young men with a secondary school attendance reduces the risk of conflict, while the same applies to the growth of per capita income. Moreover, ethnic and religious groups in the country can influence positively the risk of conflict emergence, given the fact that the fragmentation of the society decreases this risk as in such society it is more difficult for the rebels to find enough people to fight on their side. The risk of the conflict is doubled in homogeneous society where one ethnic group dominates. (Collier, Hoeffler 2000: 15, 19-20.)

Given the fact that this theory was tested and focused primarily on civil wars in Africa, there will be more variables used. The paper will focus on specific conditions selected, that increase the likelihood of conflict, such as the means of funding (commodities, diasporas or third party), enrichment and factors related to geography (urbanization, density) and population in case of *greed* model, and heterogeneity (ethnic, religious and political) with injustice/grievance (hatred, vengeance and exclusion) in case of *grievance* model.

3. *Introducing the chosen case: First Chechen War (1994-1996)*

The case investigated in this paper by the optics of the theory mentioned will be intrastate conflict that occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union – the first Chechen war that took place during 1994-1996.

Autonomous Republic of Chechen-Ingush was under the authority of the Russian Republic during the Soviet era. After several former Soviet republics gained their independence during 1991, local political leaders in Chechnya started to promote the idea of it as well. In October 1991, Dzhochar Dudayev was elected president by the Chechen people and declared the independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI). Nevertheless, these elections were not recognized by the Russian leadership and after the Soviet Union (USSR) officially dissolved on 25 December 1991, the former autonomous republic of Chechnya became part of the independent Russian Federation (RF). (UCDP 2015)

Chechnya, as one of the ethnic republics of the RF, is located on its southern border in an area that is commonly known as the North Caucasus. It is a mountainous region between the Caspian and Black Seas, with large ethnic diversity and similar culture and mentality. (Souleimanov 2012 :21) At the time of the USSR, Chechnya belonged among the least developed areas of Union which lasted even after its collapse, as the loss of economic ties to the Soviet Union led to a large decline in GDP and the decline of entire industries. Conversely, boom occurred in the oil industry. The political situation in Chechnya after the collapse of the USSR was also very unstable, mainly due to the weak position of the central leadership. Rival gangster groups has great influence on the political agenda that had divided all the national wealth. Attacks against Russian citizens by the mainly poor highlanders began to emerge. In terms of forms of governance the country had a tradition of politically or lineage-clan and territorially defined parliamentary form of government. Chechen elites maintained their influence in economic and political areas, which created strong opposition to the regime with a sub-ethnic and socio-economic order. (Souleimanov 2012 :97-100)

Russia did not recognize Dudayev as president of Chechnya since his election in October 1991, and also disagreed with his politics, which, inter alia discriminates Russian citizens living in Chechnya, but the situation was not considered so serious and critical to be worth to start military steps. After the dissolution of parliament and the Constitutional Court in June 1993, however, Dudayev's policy radicalized significantly, while he kept more or less all power and with the aim to retain it, he cooperated with various radical groups and clans. The

whole region began to destabilize increasingly and Russia thus began to seriously consider military intervention. (Dunlop 2002: 151-153)

In the context of the declaration of independence, Dudayev's forces seized key buildings in the regional capital Grozny and killed the few state representatives who resisted. Later on, after the Russian leadership repeatedly and unsuccessfully invited Chechnya to become a part of the Russian Federation, the conflict escalated radically in December 1994. (UCDP 2015) The first Chechen war started 10- 11th December 1994 when Russian side invaded Chechnya with the objective of a quick victory leading to pacification and reestablishment of a pro-Russian government. The result, however, was a long series of military operations. (Global Security 2015) Russian side supported Chechen opposition to Dudayev but it was not able to destabilise his forces so it launched a large-scale military offensive into Chechnya. Nevertheless, ChRI was influenced by already mentioned internal power struggles during the conflict and its forces can be characterised more as several different pro-Chechen groups. The fighting was accompanied by violence against civilians and indiscriminate killings, while the Russian army has carried out indiscriminate air bombings and artillery attacks as well as counterinsurgency activities, which have included human rights abuses, including disappearances, allegations of torture and execution of civilians. The Russian army managed to take control of Grozny in early 1995 but the fighting continued until April 1996, when Dudayev was killed and replaced by Maskhadov who agreed to a ceasefire with Russia. In August 1996, after a successful Chechen counterattack on Grozny, negotiations resumed and a comprehensive peace agreement was signed on 31 August 1996 in Khasavyurt that confirmed Russia's defeat and the federal army was forced to withdraw from the Chechen territory. (UCDP 2015)

Chechen conflict therefore concerned claims of sovereignty, which later turned into a question of whether, after the collapse of the USSR, Chechnya should be automatically considered part of the Russian Federation, or if his membership in the federation would require formal and explicit approval.

4. Application of the theory to the chosen conflict

4.1. Factors of the greed model and their significance in the first Chechen War

4.1.1. Financial resources for the conduct of armed conflict

The *greed* model, that explains the emergence of civil wars much better than the other model according to Colliera and Hoeffler discusses the economic terms and primarily mentions that the risk of the conflict is greater when the rebellious actor is financially motivated, especially when it possesses financial resources for managing the conflict. Mobilization of sufficient financial resources is essential for the conduct of armed conflict. While states has the possibility to gain the funds from the state budget, non-state actors do not have this option and they must find others.

The Russians financed their conduct of the first Chechen war from the state budget, as a professional army fought on their side, that was highly organized. During the conflict, Boris Jelcin was the president so he can be considered a leader of the Russian conflict party. On the Chechen side , there were fighting various paramilitary troops or militia, which commanded either by Dudayev, or war generals (of which the most famous was Shamil Basayev) and there were several Arab mujahedins involved. (Souleimanov 2012: 95). The Chechens financed the conflict through acquisition of control over export commodities, particularly oil, and partly also through the governments of other states. There are significant deposits of this raw material in Chechnya and there passes also oil pipeline through its territory, from which were stolen several thousands of tons of oil worth trillions of rubles. It is possible that a large part of this amount as well as of the amount of total oil production of Chechnya was used in financing the conflict from their part. Another way of financing was constituted by different illegal activities, such as forgery of money and financial documents and transit of arms and narcotics. (Dunlop 2002: 153) Moreover, robberies of trains occurred often with the aim of capturing the shipments. Additional sources of financing of the Chechnian side in the war were related to the governments of some Islamic states or organizations linked to these governments (Wilhelmsen 2005: 36- 39). Regarding the weapons, Chechens gained control over most of the arms caches on the territory constructed during the Soviet Union existence. (Dunlop 2002: 167).

Therefore it can be concluded that this conflict was financed through the gain of control over a certain commodity and partly also by means of other state's funds, while it was not financed by any diaspora. In addition, it was partially funded by the illegal activities and given the fact that among these illegal activities there were thefts of oil from the pipelines, this case illustrates that the financing by the means of control over a certain commodity can sometimes be one of the options of financing the conflict through illegal activities.

4.1.2. Enrichment

Another factor examined by the theory of Collier and Hoeffler is economic enrichment as a goal or one of the goals of the conflict groups. As it was already mentioned in previous part of this chapter, during the first Chechen war the enrichment was present in the form of various criminal activities on the side of Chechnya, but funds derived from them were used to finance the conflict itself. Thus it is not possible to talk about economic enrichment as a goal of any of the main actors of the conflict. It can therefore be concluded that this variable was not present in the case investigated.

4.1.3. Geographical and population factors

Even though the geographical and population factors do not play the main role in the conflict outbreak, their presence or absence is related to it, as in case of mountainous and rugged territory, high level of urbanization or density of population.

In case of Russia the degree of urbanization was indicated as more than 70 % in 1995 (IIED 2012: 2) which means that we can classify it among the more urbanized countries by the time the war occurred. The density of population in the Russian territory (Chechnya included) was 9 inhabitant/km² in 1995 (World Bank 2015) which means that we can classify it among the countries with the lower population density. The Russian territory is very vast and mostly flat except of its south border, in the area of Chechnya, where it is rather of mountainous character. The territory of Chechnya itself is rather flat in the north, the highlands are concentrated more to the south. If we consider the capital of the area, Grozny, as the strategic place of both parties of the conflict, it is situated in the mountainous area. (Souleimanov 2012: 21, Hughes 2001:32) Based on these facts, the mountainous area and population density can be considered as influential factor, unlike the urbanization which is irrelevant in this regard.

4.2. Factors of the *grievance* model and their significance in the first Chechen War

4.2.1. Inter-group hatred

In the terms of *grievance* model, which according to the authors of the chosen theory does not adequately explain the emergence of civil wars. Among the variables influencing the conflict initiation examined by this model is hatred, vengeance and political exclusion.

In the first Chechen war, we can observe presence of all variables mentioned. In case of this war it is possible to speak of political exclusion, as the Chechens did not participate in

the management of their republic in such an extent that they would like – that was completely, in the sense of governance and control, in the form of self-determination and independence. Even if the Russian side of the conflict formally recognized the difference between the Chechens and the Russian majority, Chechnya was understood as a part of its territory of which Russia did not want to give up. Ideology of Chechens was marked by the history under the Russian dominance and associated with nationalism (Wilhelmsen 2005: 36) as Chechnya was oppressed by Russians approximately 300 years (Dunlop 2002: 60). Present element was also persecution from the Russian side that can be exemplified by several violent transfers of the Chechen population, or by cases of genocide perpetrated against the Chechen ethnic group back in 1944, which is associated with hatred and vengeance (Souleimanov 2012: 82-83; Šmíd, Souleimanov, Dilbazi 2007: 185). During their history, Chechens always more or less successfully fought against Russian efforts to join their territory to Russia and thus struggle against Russian oppression in the Chechen conflict is deeply rooted in their ideology (Dunlop 2002: 9).

It is relevant to mention in this place that Chechnya was one of the poorest parts of Russia by the time of the outbreak of the conflict. Noticeable decrease in production and the extraction of oil and implicit unfavorable situation in the industry largely linked to the extraction of raw materials together with the bad situation in the area of agriculture, increasing unemployment and criminality made factors included under inter-group hatred even more significant. (Cornell 2001: 186-187, 193; Dunlop 2002: 126-127.)

4.2.2. Heterogeneity

According to Collier and Hoeffler, the existing heterogeneity in the country – ethnic, religious, political, or their combination – increases the risk of the conflict. It is necessary to point out here, that Collier and Hoeffler did not investigate in their theory whether the conflict was of ethnic character but whether there was ethnic heterogeneity present in the state where the armed conflict erupted. Chechen war was primarily a separatist ethnic conflict, considering the fact that Russians formed one conflict party and Chechens another one, as different inhabitants with distinct history, culture, ethnicity and religion. The conflict ideology on the side of Chechnya was primarily based on historical, cultural, ethnical and religious differences between Chechens and their country and Russians and their country, while they were oppressed, persecuted or even disposed by Russians for hundreds of years. On these dissimilarities and facts the Chechens based their right to create their own state and separate

from Russia, while the significance of these factors was increasing with the time and growing animosity between the conflict parties. (Šmíd, Souleimanov, Dilbazi 2007: 201) According to the data from the census in 2010, there lives 1,268,989 inhabitants in Chechnya, of whom 1,206,551, that is 95%, claim Chechen nationality. (ВСЕРОССИЙСКОЙ ПЕРЕПИСИ НАСЕЛЕНИЯ, 2010)

The religious heterogeneity can also be mentioned here. Chechens, due to certain territorial isolation in mountainous terrain, were not affected by monotheism until the 18th century and mostly professed pagan beliefs and tribal customs. Yet somehow influences of Islam began to penetrate to the territory in the 16th century. (Swirszcz, 2009: 62) At that time, the Arabs ruled in the region of Dagestan and today's Azerbaijan, where Islamic missionaries came from. Most Chechens adopted Islam during the 19th century and became members of the Islamic orders of Sufi, nashkabdija and qadirija, emphasizing the personal relationship to God. Nevertheless, radical Islam itself began to spread in Chechnya only after the first Chechen war and thus it had marginal role. (Swirszcz 2009: 63-64) During the conflict, the Islamic mujahideen were fighting on the side of Chechnya and some of the Chechen military generals even converted to Islam. Because of these influences, there was a tendency of containment and control of Islam in Russia. (Šmíd, Souleimanov, Dilbazi 2007: 186)

It is rational to conclude then, that the ethnic and religious heterogeneity were intervening variables during this conflict. Heterogeneity of the population, religious or ethnic – is linked to inter-group hatred and together they raise the risk of civil war initiation.

As far as the political heterogeneity is concerned, it should not be observed as Chechnya was formally part of Russia. If we look at the details though, difference of Chechnya from the majority of the Russian population during the Soviet era was well documented by the special status that Chechnya had in the USSR, either as an autonomous region, or Soviet Socialist Republic. After its collapse Chechens wanted to gain complete independence from the newly established Russia, following the example of other autonomous republics, which has intensified long-standing struggle against Russian rule. Regarding the Russian side, despite differences of Chechnya from the rest of Russia, they considered it theirs and did not want to give up on it, while they considered Chechen regime as illegitimate and described it as "local gangsterocracy". (Dunlop 2002: 139) It is therefore obvious that certain political heterogeneity was present as well, especially if we consider Chechens previously elected their own president.

5. Conclusion

In relation to model *grievance* ethnical and religious heterogeneity was confirmed to play a significant role during the first Chechen war, as well as the exclusion, vengeance and hatred. The only element of this model, as it was adapted for this paper that was problematic in the conflict was therefore political heterogeneity, which was eventually concluded to be present as well.

As far as model *greed* is concerned, it was confirmed that conflict was partly financed by commodities and third states, whereas funding from diaspora did not occur. Moreover, enrichment did not play a role as a goal of any of the conflict parties. In case of population and geography, being factors related to greed model, it was found out that urbanization was not relevant, while mountainous character of the territory and density of the population might have been reflected in the course of the conflict.

To sum up, in case of application on the Chechen war, the model of *greed* can not be described as much more successful than the model of *grievance*, which could mean that both are not able to adequately explain the emergence of this conflict. Nevertheless, there was a high number of factors of the theory present in this conflict while those included in model of *grievance* were present in all 6 cases and those included in model of *greed* in 4 out of 7 cases. In terms of this conflict, the factors identified can be thus considered as rather influential and model *grievance* is obviously even more successful than the model of *greed*. Based on this, we can conclude that conflict theory of Collier and Hoeffler was not confirmed in case of the First Chechen war.

6. Sources

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